(b) and (c) During the earlier meeting of the PIC held in October, 2008, the Pakistan Commissioner of Indus Waters had sought compensation in the shape of water, claiming receipt of reduced flow in river Chenab by Pakistan due to the initial filling of Baglihar Hydroelectric Plant by India. The matter was also discussed in the 103rd meeting. During the discussions, Pakistan Commissioner was categorically informed that there is no substance in his allegations.

Lord Buddha statue in Pakistan

†1395. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether terrorist have made an attempt to blow off the ancient statue of Lord Buddha in violence hit Swat valley in north-eastern part of Pakistan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has raised this matter with Pakistan;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR): (a) Yes. This was reported in September, 2007.

(b) According to the reports the statue was badly damaged.

(c) No.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) The statue is in Pakistan. It is for the Government of Pakistan to protect such ancient heritage.

Reduction of jobs in Britain

1396. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the British Government has reduced the number of jobs available to the migrants from outside the European Union, including from India;

(b) if so, the likely effect of the new policy on Indian migrants working in UK as also those proposing to migrate in United Kingdom;

(c) whether Government of India has taken up the matter with British Government; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR): (a) and (b) Yes. The UK has amended its immigration laws and has launched a five tier Points-Based System (PBS) in 2008 to streamline entry of non EU workers to UK. The tiers have different conditions, entitlements and entry clearance checks. The regulations to not apply retrospectively and their likely impact will be on the new migrants.

(c) and (d) The regulations envisaged in the immigration rules are subject to laws enacted by UK, at the discretion of their Government. In our bilateral talks we have pointed out, that the new system should not pose further hurdles for Indian nationals to enter or stay in the UK.

RPO in Hyderabad

1397. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that Regional Passport Office, Hyderabad is not issuing Passports in the prescribed time; and

(b) whether it is a fact that the Passport Adalat, which is organized every Wednesday at Hyderabad, is also not responding properly?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SHASHI THAROOR): (a) Yes. The Government is aware that in recent months the issue of passports in the Regional Passport Office Hyderabad has slowed down, resulting in the accumulation of applications. Concerted efforts are being made to clear this pendency as quickly as possible.

(b) Regional Passport Office Hyderabad organizes a Passport Adalat every week for whose who have not received passports in 60 days. Efforts are made to clear the pending applications and issue passports immediately to those who attend the Adalats.

Pending applications for passports

1398. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications pending in each Regional Passport Office (RPO) as on date, State-wise;

(b) the steps being taken to clear the pending applications expeditiously;

(c) the number of passport offices in various States inspected during the last three years and the current year;

(d) the details of lapses/irregularities notified therein, RPO-wise;

(e) whether proposals have been received from States for opening of new passport offices; and